

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A collection of data relating to multiple instances of multiple entity types, the data collection comprising:
 - a) a plurality of data cells containing all of the data in the collection, with each cell containing
 - i) a single instance identifier value identifying one specific instance of a specific entity type;
 - ii) a single attribute type identifier value identifying one specific attribute type for the specific entity type; and
 - iii) an attribute value for the identified one specific attribute type.
2. The data collection of claim 1, wherein each data cell further contains:
 - iv) a single entity identifier value identifying the specific entity type.
3. The data collection of claim 2, wherein all cells having the same instance identifier value and the same entity identifier value together define a cell set containing all of the data in the collection relating to the one specific instance of the one specific entity type.
4. The data collection of claim 2, wherein at least one cell has an attribute value that contains multiple, separate values relating to the specific attribute type of the specific instance of the specific entity type.
5. The data collection of claim 2, wherein each cell has only four fields relating to actual data, the four fields containing the instance identifier value, the entity identifier value, the attribute type identifier, and the attribute value.
6. The data collection of claim 5, wherein no two cells contain the same values in all of the four fields.
7. The data collection of claim 5, wherein each cell further contains meta data associated with the cell.
8. The data collection of claim 7, wherein the meta data includes data type information.

9. A method of establishing an association between a first data cell and a second data cell, with each data cell containing entity instance identifying information and a single attribute value for the entity instance, the method comprising:
- a) creating a third data cell formatted in the same way as the first and second data cells,
 - b) using the entity instance identifying information found in the first data cell as the entity instance identifying information of the third data cell, and
 - c) using the entity instance identifying information of the second data cell as the attribute value for the third data cell.
10. The method of claim 9, wherein the first, second, and third data cells further contain entity type information, and further comprising the step of:
- d) using the entity type information of the first data cell as the entity type information of the third data cell.
11. The method of claim 10, wherein the first, second, and third data cells further contain attribute type information, and further comprising the step of:
- e) using the entity type information of the second data cell as the attribute type information of the third data cell.
12. The method of claim 9, further comprising the steps of:
- d) creating a fourth data cell formatted in the same way as the first, second, and third data cell;
 - e) using the entity instance identifying information found in the second data cell as the entity instance identifying information of the fourth data cell, and
 - f) using the entity instance identifying information of the first data cell as the attribute value for the fourth data cell.

0906090-062904

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the first, second, third, and fourth data cells further contain entity type information, and further comprising the step of:
 - g) using the entity type information of the first data cell as the entity type information of the third data cell; and
 - h) using the entity type information of the second data cell as the entity type information of the fourth data cell.
14. The method of claim 13, wherein the first, second, third, and fourth data cells further contain attribute type information, and further comprising the step of:
 - i) using the entity type information of the second data cell as the attribute type information of the third data cell; and
 - j) using the entity type information of the first data cell as the attribute type information of the fourth data cell.
15. A collection of data cells, wherein each cell contains a single element of data relating to a specific instance of an entity, the collection comprising:
 - a) a first data cell containing four fields each having a value;
 - b) a second data cell containing four fields each having a value;
 - c) a linking cell defining an association between the first cell and the second cell, the linking cell having four fields each having values, the value of two of the fields of the linking cell being the same as two of the values of the first cell fields; the value of the remaining two fields of the linking cell being the same as two of the values of the second cell fields.
16. The data collection of claim 15, wherein the linking cell has the same format as the first and second cells.
17. The data collection of claim 16, wherein the linking cell utilizes a flag to indicate that the linking cell contains linking information.

18. The data collection of 16, wherein the first, second, and linking cells each contain the following four fields:
 - i) an entity instance field;
 - ii) an entity type field;
 - iii) an attribute type field; and
 - iv) an attribute value field.
19. The data collection of claim 18, wherein the linking cell contains the entity instance field value and the entity type field value of the first cell as the values of its own entity instance field and its entity type field, respectively; and further wherein the linking cell contains the entity instance field value and the entity type field value of the second cell as the values of its own attribute value field and its attribute type field, respectively.
20. The data collection of claim 19, further comprising a second linking cell also having an entity instance field, an entity type field, an attribute type field, and an attribute value field, wherein the second linking cell contains the entity instance field value and the entity type field value of the second cell as the values of its own entity instance field and its entity type field, respectively; and further wherein the second linking cell contains the entity instance field value and the entity type field value of the first cell as the values of its own attribute value field and its attribute type field, respectively.